



AARP Montana
30 W. 14th Street
Suite 301
Helena, MT 59601

T 1-866-295-7278
F 406-441-2230
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/mt

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 2

Date 2.16.09

Bill No. SB 412

February 16th, 2009

TO: Members of the Senate Public and Welfare Committee

FROM: Rita Charles, volunteer advocate AARP Montana

RE: SB 412 – Remove waiting period for CHIP

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Rita Charles and I'm a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana—a non-profit, non-partisan organization of 165,000 members in this state. AARP Montana believes that because of the special nature of the Children's Health Insurance Program, the traditional waiting period that one undergoes when acquiring health insurance should be waived.

We must again point out that Montanans supported the Healthy Kids Initiative by over 70% in the polls last November. And when they did so, they were not necessarily supporting the exact provisions of the CHIP plan; rather they supported the idea that children should be provided a quality health care as part of their equal opportunity to take advantage of their education and excel in a future career.

The CHIP program is in place so that children do not have to go without health insurance. The waiting period is at odds with that goal. Three months is a long time, and enough financial and emotional damage could be inflicted on a family to outweigh the future good of enrolling in the CHIP program.

We urge your support on SB 412. Thank you for your time.